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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/854,528	05/15/2001	Toru Suzuki	00653/01-F-011US/UA	8224
513	7590	07/30/2004	EXAMINER	
			HOFFMANN, JOHN M	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			1731	

DATE MAILED: 07/30/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)
	09/854,528	SUZUKI ET AL.
	Examiner	Art Unit
	John Hoffmann	1731

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 29 June 2004.

2a) This action is **FINAL**. 2b) This action is non-final.

3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1-3, 12 and 13 is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6) Claim(s) 1-3, 12 and 13 is/are rejected.

7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10) The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) All b) Some * c) None of:
1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.

4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
5) Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6) Other: _____.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claims 1-3 and 12-13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

The term “colloid process” is indefinite to its meaning – to the degree that one of ordinary skill would not be able to tell the metes and bounds of the invention. First, the specification does not have any definition for this term. Although page 11 of the specification lists some methods by the term, one of ordinary skill would not consider this to be a definition.

Second, new claims 12-13 refer to sizes of 1.0 micron and 0.69 micron. However, as per the Grant & Hackh's chemical dictionary page 145 (col. 2, lines 4-5) indicates that 0.1 micron is the largest dimension for something to be a colloid. One of ordinary skill would be confused as to whether the term “colloid process” can encompass non-colloid systems (such as particles larger than 0.1 micron) or not.

Third, applicant argues in the paper of June 29 that the Giessen process is not a colloid process because it does not have any “special external force”. However, applicant's examples of page 11 do not have the special external force similar to that of the slip casting – especially the tape casting.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1-3 and 10-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Wei 5518660 alone, or in view of Applicant's admission on pages 1-2 of the specification and Van Nostrand's Scientific Encyclopedia (6th ed.)

See Wei, col. 3, lines 28-44. Wei does not disclose a magnetic field. Van Nostrand, page 981, col. 2, 2nd full paragraph discloses that there is a magnetic field over the surface of the earth. It would have been obvious to perform the Wei process on the surface of the earth (i.e. in the magnetic field of the earth) because that would be the cheapest place to do it. The disclosed slip casting is deemed to be a colloid process because Applicant's discloses that slip casting is a colloid process.

The preamble of the claim calls for "an oriented sintered ceramic product". First, it is noted that it does not appear that the preamble breathes life an meaning into the claim. However, it would been inherent that the sintered ceramic product would have been oriented in the sintering furnace, or oriented in its final package. Alternatively, it would have been obvious to package it firmly in a box, so that it can be easily shipped, stacked, protected, etc.

Alternatively, Applicant's disclosure is relied upon to show it is known to make "oriented" sintered products from alumina to increase their strength. It would have been obvious to orient the Wei product to increase its strength.

It is noted from page 11, lines 7-10 of the present specification, that Applicant intends the term "magnetic field" to encompass weak fields.

Claims 2-3 and 10-11 are clearly met from the above cited portion of Wei.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments with respect to claims 1-3 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Conclusion

Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within

TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to John Hoffmann whose telephone number is (571) 272 1191. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday, 7:00- 3:30.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Steve Griffin can be reached on 571-272-1189. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

John Hoffmann
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 1731

7-27-04

jmh